

XXXI.—On the correct Name of the Pied Flycatcher.

By ERNST HARTERT, Ph.D.

THE first available and certain name for this species is *Muscicapa atricapilla* Linnæus, Syst. Nat. ed. xii. p. 326 (1766), and it should therefore be called *Muscicapa atricapilla*.

Mr. Harry C. Oberholser (*cf.* Smithson. Misc. Coll. 48, 1, p. 65, and Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus. xxviii. p. 909, footnote) declares categorically that the Pied Flycatcher should be called *Ficedula ficedula*. In the footnote on p. 909 he says:—" *Motacilla ficedula* Linnæus, Syst. Nat. ed. x. i. 1758, p. 185. This is undoubtedly the same as *Motacilla atricapilla* Linnæus, Syst. Nat. ed. x. p. 187."

In the 10th edition of the 'Systema Naturæ' we find *Motacilla ficedula* with the following diagnosis:—" *M. subfusca, subtus alba, pectore cinereo maculato.*" The quotations are:—Fauna Suecica 231; Will. orn. 163; Raj. av. 81, no. 12; Alb. av. 3, p. 25, t. 26. "Habitat in Europa." Turning to the first source, Fauna Suecica 231, we find the same diagnosis and the same quotations as in the 'Systema Naturæ,' ed. x., while a description is added as follows:—"Color supra totus e fusco castaneus, subtus alba aut albo-cinereascens." Nobody who knows the Pied Flycatcher can pretend that either Linnæus's diagnosis or his description refers to the male, female, or young of this species. Let us now examine the other quotations.

Willughby's description is: "Colore supinè per caput, dorsum, alas & caudam ex fusco ad castaneum vergente. Foemina pronè tota albicat, mas ex albo ad cinereum vergit. Alarum remiges in mare nigrae sunt cum quibusdam intercurrentibus albis, in foemina ad castaneum vergunt; quemadmodum etiam cauda, quae in mare etiam est nigra. Contra fit in pedibus. Hi namque in mare sunt subcastanei, in foemina nigri." This description (mostly taken from Aldrovandus) is not clear. It cannot possibly be said to refer to the Pied Flycatcher, though it may perhaps be a mixture of descriptions of the female Blackcap and female

Pied Flycatcher. It is also very interesting to read the rest of Willughby's article. The birds then (in the 17th century) and still exported from Cyprus, and in those days called Cyprus-birds, were and are mostly Blackcaps, though not exclusively. Ray's description is merely an extract of Willughby's. Lastly, Albin figures and describes a "small long-bodied bird," which he calls the "Fig-eater," and which, among other remarkable characters, has a "yellow breast, spotted with black." This description most certainly does not refer to a Pied Flycatcher. The figure is abominable, and, whatever it may be meant for, is not a Pied Flycatcher, but more probably a sort of Pipit. Albin "had it out of the Collection of Sir Thomas Lowther." Unfortunately that collection, containing so many birds figured by Albin and named from Albin's work by Linnæus, seems to have disappeared.

Mr. Oberholser crowns his assertion, that the name *ficedula* must be adopted for the Pied Flycatcher, with the remark that it is "undoubtedly the same as *Motacilla atricapilla*, Syst. Nat. ed. x. p. 187, and as it stands first should be adopted." This remark, however, is most careless, because *Motacilla atricapilla* L. is not a Flycatcher, but undoubtedly the Blackcap, our *Sylvia atricapilla*!

In the 12th edition (i. p. 330) Linnæus adds to his *Motacilla ficedula* quotations which certainly refer to the Pied Flycatcher, notably the very good figure of Frisch, and a description which is apparently taken from Frisch's plate, but the diagnosis is the same as that of 1758. Therefore, some writers might be inclined to regard the article on the *Motacilla ficedula* of 1766 as a correction and completion of that of 1758 (which, as we have seen, is not referable to the Pied Flycatcher), and might therefore accept the name *ficedula*. But there is already, before the appearance of the name *ficedula*, on p. 326 the very clear and undoubted description of the Pied Flycatcher under the name *Muscicapra atricapilla*. Thus the only course we can take is:—

1. To discard *Motacilla ficedula* of 1758 as a doubtful mixture.

2. To treat *Motacilla ficedula* of 1766 as a partial synonym of *Muscicapa atricapilla* and partially as a doubtful mixture.

3. To accept *Motacilla atricapilla* of 1758 (p. 187) as the undoubtedly correct name of the Blackcap.

4. To accept *Muscicapa atricapilla* of 1766 (which has nothing to do with Linnæus's *Motacilla atricapilla*) as the correct name of the Pied Flycatcher.

The generic name *Ficedula* cannot be used for the Black-and-White Flycatchers, because, first of all, we cannot separate the various genera adopted by Oberholser, as I shall shew elsewhere, and, secondly, it is a Brissonian name, which, as I explained at the last Zoological Congress in Berlin, cannot be adopted. Therefore, I repeat once more, the Pied Flycatcher cannot be called *Ficedula ficedula*, but should be termed *Muscicapa atricapilla*.

XXXII.—*Proceedings at the Anniversary Meeting of the British Ornithologists' Union, 1906.*

THE Annual Meeting of the British Ornithologists' Union for this year was held at the house of the Zoological Society of London, No. 3 Hanover Square (by permission), on May 30th. In the absence of the President, the Chair was taken by Dr. P. L. Selater, D.Sc., F.R.S.

The Minutes of the last Annual Meeting were read and confirmed.

The Report of the Committee announced the continued prosperity of the Union during the past year, as regards both its Membership and its finances.

The volume of 'The Ibis' for 1905 was the fifth of the eighth series, under the joint Editorship of Dr. P. L. Selater, D.Sc., F.R.S., and Mr. A. H. Evans, M.A. It contained 677 pages, and was illustrated by 11 coloured and 2 uncoloured plates.

With much regret the Committee reported the deaths of the following Members of the Union:—

Ordinary Members: Dr. William T. Blanford, Mr. James